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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 25 February 2010, at 10.30 a.m.

Temporary Chairman: Mr. Pascoe (Under-Secretary-General)
Chairman: Mr. St. Aimee ..... (Saint Lucia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Opening of the session by the Under-Secretary-General

1. **The Temporary Chairman** read out a statement from the Secretary-General addressed to the Special Committee.

2. December 2010 would mark the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Special Committee should use the occasion to reflect on progress, with a view towards completing its historic task.

3. Among the achievements during the Second International Decade was the reduction in the number of Non-Self-Governing Territories from 17 to 16 as a result of Timor-Leste's hard-won independence. The Special Committee had also assisted the people of Tokelau to exercise their right to self-determination in two votes.

4. Creative solutions were needed for the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. If the United Nations was to fulfil its obligations in supporting the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of those Territories, a pragmatic and realistic approach, taking into account the specific circumstances of each, was most likely to lead to concrete results.

5. In recent years, a dialogue between the Special Committee and the administering Powers had strengthened. The Secretary-General encouraged all concerned to continue in that spirit as the Special Committee charted the way forward. It was likewise crucial for those Powers to work with the people in the Territories under their respective administrations to generate further momentum.

6. The Secretary-General commended the Special Committee for its accomplishments and for its steadfast commitment to ridding the world of colonialism. The Secretariat stood ready to continue lending all possible support to its important work in the year ahead.

Adoption of the agenda

7. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

8. *Mr. St. Aimee (Saint Lucia) was elected Chairperson, Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Mr. Davies (Sierra Leone) were elected Vice-Chairpersons, and Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) was elected Rapporteur, by acclamation.*

9. *Mr. St. Aimee (Saint Lucia) took the Chair.*

10. **The Chairperson** said that the delegations of Algeria, Argentina and Spain had indicated their wish to participate as observers in the opening meeting of the Special Committee.

11. The Special Committee had yet to complete its work to usher in an era of self-determination. The First International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had begun with the expectation that the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories would become independent. However, the Second Decade had ended with only one, Timor-Leste, having achieved that goal, and the Special Committee must do better.

12. That lack of progress did not mean that the General Assembly had been dormant. The Assembly had adopted a series of critical resolutions on a wide range of decolonization issues during the previous two decades, providing a road map for self-determination and subsequently, decolonization, for all the remaining Territories. The problem had been and continued to be the failure to implement those resolutions.

13. Creative ways must be found to overcome the difficulties associated with the decolonization process, while paying genuine attention to the economic and social needs and interests of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee must concentrate on finding ways to move that process forward before the end of the Second International Decade in 2010.

14. The Special Committee had been the focal point within the United Nations for helping the people in the Non-Self-Governing Territories determine their political future without external interference. It must continue its work in a pragmatic, proactive, dynamic and innovative manner if it was to bring about concrete and meaningful outcomes.

15. The responsibilities of the administering Powers must be recognized by all parties concerned. Those Powers must face up to their responsibilities especially with regard to disseminating information about the

options available to people in the Territories. The regional seminars on decolonization, held mostly in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, had provided excellent venues for enhancing education and public awareness of decolonization, thus ensuring that the peoples of the Territories could make informed decisions regarding their future political status. In that connection, he welcomed the offer of the territorial Government to host the 2010 regional seminar on decolonization in Nouméa, New Caledonia, in addition to the suggestion that a mission should visit the Territory.

16. Administering Powers must show political will to engage positively with their respective Territories. The case of Tokelau and the Government of New Zealand could set a benchmark for all others to emulate. The United Nations should continue to address the special needs of the Territories, and administering Powers could be supported in their obligations through assistance from the specialized agencies and international institutions.

Organization of work (A/AC.109/2010/L.1 and L.2)

17. **The Chairperson** drew attention to a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/AC.109/2010/L.1, indicating the resolutions and decisions relevant to the work of the Special Committee for the current year. The Committee also had before it document A/AC.109/2010/L.2, containing a note by the Chairperson concerning the Special Committee's organization of work, programme of work and timetable. The reference to the "Caribbean Regional Seminar" in Part B of the annex to that document should be changed to "Pacific Regional Seminar". It was expected that the work of the Special Committee would conclude well before the end of June 2010 so that all of its reports would be available to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

18. He took it that the Special Committee wished to approve its proposed organization of work for the current year, as orally revised, on the understanding that the Special Committee might subsequently revise its meeting schedule as and when required.

19. *It was so decided.*

Increase in the membership of the Special Committee (A/AC.109/2010/1 and A/AC.109/2010/L.3)

20. **The Chairperson** drew attention to a letter addressed to the outgoing Chairperson by the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua (A/AC.109/2010/1), which conveyed a request that the Special Committee should consider granting Nicaragua membership of the Special Committee, and to the draft decision which he had submitted, whereby the General Assembly would appoint Nicaragua as a member of the Special Committee (A/AC.109/2010/L.3). Nicaragua had participated in the work of the Special Committee for a number of years as an observer and the Committee had always embraced those who were keen to engage with its work. Nicaragua's membership request was therefore a positive step.

21. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba), supported by **Mr. Gregoire** (Dominica), **Ms. Vivas Mendoza** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), **Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia), **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), **Mr. Balé** (Congo), **Mr. Carrión-Mena** (Ecuador), **Mr. Loayza Barea** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), **Ms. Williams** (Grenada), **Mr. Jomaa** (Tunisia) and **Mr. Sitnikov** (Russian Federation), said that Nicaragua's request showed once more the importance of the Special Committee for Member States. Cuba supported the recommendation that the Committee should increase its membership and accept Nicaragua's request.

22. *Draft decision A/AC.109/2010/L.3 was adopted.*

23. **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua) said that it was an honour for Nicaragua to join the Special Committee. Thanking all those who had supported its membership, he expressed particular gratitude to the representatives of the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas. He renewed his country's solidarity with those peoples still suffering under the yoke of colonialism.

24. **The Chairperson** said that, in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Special Committee would be convened without the presence of the quorum required under rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. That would enable the Special Committee to declare its meetings open and to continue its work without the required quorum. However, the presence of a majority of the members would be required for any decision to be taken.

Other matters

25. **The Chairperson** said that a formal meeting, tentatively scheduled for 18 March 2010, would be

held to accept the offer of New Caledonia to host the 2010 Pacific regional seminar and to endorse the seminar agenda and rules of procedure, the composition of the official delegation of the Special Committee to the seminar and the list of experts, non-governmental organizations and other participants.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.